



Remarks as Delivered by DNI Clapper on the 9/11 Commission 10th Anniversary

**Transcript / Remarks as Delivered by
The Honorable James R. Clapper
Director of National Intelligence**

9/11 Commission 10th Anniversary

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Well, thank you very much for the introduction. I apologize for being late. I was earning my paycheck in the White House. So I am sure you will understand.

I want to thank Chairman Kean, Vice Chairman Hamilton, and the 9/11 Commissioners. Actually, I think the right thing to thank them for is their love of our country. That's been manifested obviously in each case, in many, many ways, but particularly their commitment when they were commissioners, when that was going on. But even more importantly, I think, is the sustainment of that commitment, which I think at its roots—they would never say it, I don't think—but it really reflects their love for the country.

Also, I feel obliged thank them for their continuous support for the Intelligence Community and our national security structure. The past few days and weeks have been intense with world events, and so I appreciate the chance this morning to stop by briefly and talk about the journey that the Intelligence Community has taken over the past decade. And like all such journeys, this one is like a work in progress.

Today we face "the most diverse threats I've seen in my fifty, now fifty-one, years in the intelligence business." I started using that line in the midst of the Arab Spring events, three years ago. I'm still using that line, because it's still true. And the terrorist threat to the United States is still very, very real. And I'll speak to that more in a moment.

The threats we are facing are more diverse than they were three years ago or at any time since I've started in this business in 1963. These recent world events show how complex our challenges are—as does the report commenting on the 10 year anniversary of the commission.



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The terrorist threat is not diminishing. It is spreading globally and it is morphing into more and more into so-called franchises. The rise of ISIL, for example, is particularly of concern. And the literally thousands of foreign fighters who gravitated to Syria and now are returning to their countries of origin are a great concern to us. So again, just to repeat as the report states, the terrorist threat is not diminishing.

And of course there are a lot of complex issues that don't necessarily make headlines, and I would cite for example, those that occur in the cyber realm.

Complicating our situation – for the past year-or-so, the IC has been working through what I've referred to as the "Perfect Storm" of factors that cut into our capabilities. We've lost intelligence, despite what you hear or read. We have lost intelligence sources because of the unauthorized disclosures. We've made some policy choices that limit where and what we can collect.

Intelligence collection and sharing have become more difficult because of damaged relationships internationally, and also with domestic partners in the commercial sector. And to round out the perfect storm are the major significant budget cuts that we've taken the last 3 years, and our forecast to take more budget cuts in the future.

The bottom line of this "perfect storm" is that basically we as a nation, in my considered professional opinion, are accepting more risk than we were three years ago, or even one year ago.

Now that sounds "doom and gloom" and foreboding. I acknowledge that. I think what I was supposed to talk about this morning is where we, as an Intelligence Community with all of those challenges and vicissitudes. We are in a much better shape to address these challenges than we were in 2001.

And I do want to pay credit to them. That's why I wanted to come over here briefly, to pay due credit to the work of the 9/11 Commission, which I think has been critical for setting the direction of IC reform since 9/11.

I want to quote a passage from the report, which I believe nails the problems we had as a community at the time. And I was in it; so I know.

The Commissioners wrote: "The agencies cooperated, some of the time. But even such cooperation as there was is not the same as joint action. When agencies cooperate, one



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defines the problem and seeks help with it. When they act jointly, the problem and options for action are defined differently from the start.”

So for the past decade since those lines were published, with the 9/11 Commission Report as a compass and the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, or IRTPA legislation as the map, I think the IC has chartered the course of integration. And that has been my mantra, my emphasis since I started this job four years ago.

In the summer of 2001, which the Commissioners described as “blinking red,” we were rather disconnected as a community. The 60 percent of our workforce, though, that we’ve hired since 9/11 tend to look upon integration as a reality rather than as some distant vision the future. They come to us integration minded, if I can use that phrase. And so from my part, they have been a huge influence, a huge impetus, toward promoting integration in the community.

We are responding to threats, cooperating on developmental projects and executing operations that we wouldn’t have even envisioned 13 years ago. We evolved “targeting,” for example, as a new discipline: tracking the digital trail of terrorists through massive volumes of information, elusive signals, and increasingly interconnected databases. We’ve found and are exploiting the value of financial intelligence and threat finance. We found UBL, and we worked to dismantle the infrastructure around him. And over the past year, we’ve faced the leaks, sequestration, world events, and operational challenges as an integrated community.

And I have to say I am proud of the community and the way we’ve addressed these challenges and the great men and women we have in the Intelligence Community.

As an integrated Intelligence Community, we’ve made tough decisions on decreasing budgets, cutting entire programs and capabilities rather than taxing on an “everyone give in the office” basis - what we have traditionally done.

As an integrated Intelligence Community, we’ve made decisions to declassify more than 3,000 pages of documents ...previously classified. Because the best way to deal with misconceptions that have resulted from the leaks, I believe, is to increase transparency. In fact that’s my major takeaway from this whole experience—has been the need for transparency.

As an integrated Intelligence Community, we’ve faced world events and operational challenges. And now we approach problems, by bringing together individuals from different backgrounds – from across the IC – to analyze a case and plan how to manage it. We put our best – and most appropriate – IC-wide resources up against our toughest challenges.



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Now, none of that is to say—and not to overdo it on the cheerleading business—none of this to say we are perfect as an IC. We certainly aren't. No complex organization composed of thousands of human beings is ever going to be perfect. And we have some serious challenges in front of us. And so to meet these challenges, we are going to have to reshape our capabilities.

We are developing systems for multi-INT persistence from space. And that is about all I can say about it. This is a big idea for intelligence. And we are now using cross-community groups, making those capabilities integral to our new systems.

The other major idea I have to mention here, which I don't think would have happened in the absence of the way we are configured today, is what's called IC ITE, the Intelligence Community IT Enterprise. This is the first time ever, we'll integrate, in a single IT enterprise, the entire IC.

This will take integration to the next level. The objective here is put all the intelligence agencies on a common IT network and infrastructure.

And apart from the efficiencies we will accrue from this, saving money, reducing our dependence on a large cadre of IT contractors; it will both promote integration and promote sharing and security with the attendant security enhancement we intend to build into this.

The bumper sticker is "Tag the Data. Tag the People." So we can audit the data and we can audit with whom we are sharing that data, which of course has obvious implications in a post Snowden revelations era.

So, I started out my career in this business in 1963 in the Signals Intelligence business, which we never talked about, ever. Doing things like this, for me, is genetically antithetical. I am sure the young Jim Clapper of 51 years ago would be shocked with the level of detail that we now publically talk about SIGINT in 2014.

But this is indicative of the huge changes that are taking place, with respect to transparency.

We, as an IC, depend on the trust of the public – and of our foreign and domestic partners, and certainly of the elected representatives of Congress. We can't do our job without that.

And so I believe we were heading down that path, regardless of the leaks of this past year. And, I know we'll need to be even more transparent going forward. But, in truth, we'll never reach intelligence nirvana.



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As we push forward with integration, we'll make mistakes and we'll fall short. But being a learning organization, we will profit from them and get better. So this voyage of intelligence integration, is, as I say, a journey in progress.

So to conclude, I want to thank the 9/11 Commissioners again, those who are here and those who are not, for inviting me to speak and spend some time with you this morning, and more importantly, for giving us a compass – a means to find our way forward in our integration journey.

I am both proud and humbled to represent the Intelligence Community and the men and women in it, this morning. So to the commissioners, thank you for what you did for the Intelligence Community and our nation 10 years ago, thank you for what you have continued to do in that spirit, and thank you for your wisdom.

Thanks very much, and thanks for having me.

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